

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: NATO MNUC
SUBJ: THE "N-BOMB" IN THE ITALIAN PRESS

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1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: THE APRIL 4 NEW YORK TIMES ARTI-
CLE ASSERTING A DECISION BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO FORGO THE
PRODUCTION OF THE ERW HAS PROVOKED INTENSE AND PROMINENT COVER-
AGE ACROSS THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF THE ITALIAN PRESS. REPORTING
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HAS TO A GREAT EXTENT BEEN COLORED BY THE POLITICAL PROPENSITIES
OF THE INDIVIDUAL DAILIES AND THERE IS A STRONG ELEMENT
OF SUSPICION OF CONSPIRACY SUGGESTED IN MANY OF THE
ARTICLES, BUT CONSISTENT THREADS RUN THROUGH MOST OF THE
SERIOUS ATTEMPTS AT ANALYSIS: IT IS AMOMENTOUS DECISION;
THERE IS HEAVEY OPPOSITION TO IT IN THE U.S. AND IN THE
ALLIANCE; IT IS A SUCCESS FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN PROPA-

GANDA AND OFFERS THE USSR AN IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE. EMBASSY HAS NOT HAD OCCASION TO USE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN REFTEL. AS THE ISSUE IS ON THE FRONT PAGE IN ITALY, WE WOULD WELCOME ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE DEPT MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE. FOLLOWING IS A SAMPLING FROM THE PRESS OF APRIL 5 AND 6.

2. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MOUTHPIECE IL POPOLO ON APRIL 6 NOTES STRONG CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ERW, QUOTING SENATOR NUNN AS SAYING THE DECISION NOT TO PRODUCE THE WEAPON "WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE AS WELL AS FOR THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS...IT WOULD PLANT IN THE RUSSIAN MIND THE IMAGE OF A HESITANT AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE COURAGE NECESSARY TO FACE THE HARD DECISIONS NECESSARY FOR DEFENSE." IL POPOLO SUGGESTS THAT THE DECISION NOT TO PRODUCE THE ERW WOULD HAVE STRONGLY NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS ON THE ALLIANCE, "BECAUSE, INDEPENDENT OF THE MILITARY MERITS OF THE 'N' PROJECT, ONCE AGAIN WASHINGTON WILL HAVE REACHED A DECISION OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE TO ATLANTIC SECURITY WITHOUT HAVING HAD MORE THAN PRO FORM CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ALLIES."

3. COMMUNIST PAPER OF APRIL 5, DESCRIBING THE ERW AS A WEAPON THAT "CAN KILL THE POPULATION OF AN ENTIRE CITY WITHOUT DAMAGING A SINGLE BUILDING," REPORTS WIDESPREAD PREFERENCE IN THE U.S. CONGRESS AND AMONG U.S. ALLIES FOR SUSPENDING PRODUCTION OF THE ERW RATHER THAN CANCEL-
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LING THE PROJECT. THE ARTICLE QUOTES BOTH GENSCHER AND MOELLEMAN OF THE FRG AS SUPPORTING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ERW INTO THE ALLIED ARSENAL AND SUGGESTS THAT UNDER SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER'S RECENT VISIT TO GERMANY, ORIGINALLY THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO PROVOKE STATEMENTS OF THAT KIND FROM FRG LEADERS, MUST BE SEEN IN THE DIFFERENT LIGHT CAST BY THE ALLEGED DECISION OF THE PRESIDENT.

4. MAIN FRONT-PAGE APRIL 6 ARTICLE IN NATIONALLY PROMINENT CENTRIST DAILY LA STAMPA OF TURIN IS HEADLINED "DIPLOMATIC MANEUVERS AROUND THE N-BOMB." REPORTER PAOLO GARIMBERTI FINDS A CONNECTION AMONG THE N-BOMB DECISION, THE VISIT OF BREZHNEV TO BONN PLANNED FOR MAY, THE SUNDAY RAMBOUILLET MEETING BETWEEN GENSCHER AND GISCARD D'ESTAING, AND THE "SUDDEN AND UNPLANNED" VISIT OF GENSCHER TO WASHINGTON. THIS CONCATENATION OF EVENTS, HE SUGGESTS, "REINFORCES ONCE AGAIN THE SUSPICION THAT THE GREAT BIPOLAR GAME BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR CONTINUES... PASSING OVER THE HEADS OF EUROPEAN LEADERS OR AT MOST, MAKING THEM UNWILLING PROTAGONISTS." THE NEGATIVE ERW DECISION, GARIMBERTI ASSERTS, WAS MADE LAST WEEK BEFORE THE PRESIDENT LEFT FOR AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA, UNDER-

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER INFORMED THE ALLIES BEGINNING WITH THE FRG (EXPLAINING THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE GERMAN CANCELLOR), AND IT IS VERY LIKELY, HE CONCLUDES, THAT THE PRESIDENT'S INTENTION WAS "DISCREETLY CONVEYED TO THE KREMLIN." "THE POLITICAL MEANING OF THIS INTRICATE AFFAIR IS CLEAR. SOVIET DIPLOMACY, SHOWING ITSELF MORE ABLE AND OPPORTUNE THAN WHAT IS COMMONLY THOUGHT IN THE WEST, TRIES TO DRAW THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM INTERNAL CONFLICT OR, IN ANY EVENT, THE LACK OF COORDINATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, AIDED IN THIS CASE BY THE POLITICAL UNPREDICTABILITY OF PRESIDENT CARTER." THE USSR GARIMBERTI ASSERTS, IS MOREOVER PROFITING FROM TENSIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE FRG CAUSED BY U.S. NON-PROLIFERATION POLICIES AND BY U.S. PRESURES FOR GERMAN ECONOMIC STIMULATION. RENOUNCING THE ERW, THE U.S. HAS

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LET A HAND TO THE USSR BY REMOVING AN IMPORTANT BARGAINING CHIP IN FRG/USSR RELATIONS. ERGO, THE BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN IS ON. AND THAT IS WHY THE AMERICANS AND THE GERMANS HAVE IN REAL TERMS EXCHANGED THEIR POSITIONS ON ERW. "THE LESSON OF THIS COMPLICATED DIPLOMATIC AFFAIR," GARIMBERTI CONCLUDES, "IS THAT THE MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS UPON WHICH THE WESTERN WORLD REST TODAY ARE NEAR THE POINT OF DISINTEGRATION AND THAT IS TO THE CLEAR ADVANTAGE OF THE USSR."

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5. WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT MODESTI OF FLORENCE'S CONSERVATIVE LA NAZIONE DESCRIBES THE "VIOLENT TABBIE AROUND PRESIDENT CARTER OVER HIS INTENTION TO CANCEL THE REPRODUCTION OF THE N-BOMB. THE REACTION TO THE TIMES' REVELATIONS....WAS BEYOND ALL EXPECTATIONS; THE SENATE, THE HOUSE, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE PENTAGON, THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL HAVE ALL JOINED IN ATTACKING THE DECISION." THE DECISION, "DENIED, BUT IN PRACTICE ALREADY MADE," THE ARTICLE ASSERTS, "IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS IN THE CONFRONTATION WITH MOSCOW." A WALL STREET JOURNAL EDITORIAL, UNCLASSIFIED

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MODESTI REPORTS, CALLED IT "A FRIGHTENING DECISION." ACCORDING TO SOME SOURCES, HE WRITES, THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION IS PART OF A SECRET AGREEMENT WITH THE USSR IN WHICH MOSCOW WOULD LIMIT PRODUCTION OF THE SS-20 MISSILE OR "PERHAPS REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ITS MILITARY ADVISORS AND CUBAN TROOPS IN ETHIOPIA."

6. EXTREME LEFT MANIFESTO PROMINENTLY, BUT BRIEFLY, ASSERTS THAT IN NATO CIRCLES IT IS EXPECTED THAT FINAL DECISION WILL BE AFFIRMATIVE AND THAT THE ENTIRE AFFAIR HAS BEEN "ORCHESTRATED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS PRINCIPAL ALLIES, BONN AND LONDON".

7. LEFTIST LA REPUBBLICA HEADLINED ON APRIL 5 "UNCERTAINTY OF THE WHITE HOUSE ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB," AND FOLLOWED UP ON THE 6TH WITH "CARTER EVEN MORE UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB." THE LATER ARTICLE REPORTS THAT IN SOVIET UN CIRCLES IT WAS NOTED THAT SUSPENSION OF THE DECISION WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON DETENTE. SHOULD THE PRESIDENT DECIDE AGAINST THE ERW, "IT IS NOT TO BE EXCLUDED THAT BREZHNEV COULD COME TO NEW YORK FOR THE UNGA ON DISARMAMENT ON THE 23RD." IN CIRCLES OPPOSED TO THE ALLEGED PRESIDENTIAL DECISION, "IT WAS NOTED THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN RATIFYING SALT II." THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO QUOTE SENATOR BAKER, "PUTTING OFF

THE DECISION WOULD BE AN ERROR IN A LONG SERIES OF ERRORS AND WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE PROSPECTS FOR SALT."

8. CONSERVATIVE IL TEMPO FRONT-PAGED APRIL 6 AN EDITORIAL HEADED "WORDS AND ARMAMENTS." "THE POSSIBILITY THAT PRESIDENT CARTER DECIDES TO RENOUNCE THE PRODUCTION OF THE N-BOMB IS ENOUGH TO INSPIRE SOME REFLECTION ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE COMMUNIST BLOC CONSTANTLY CONDITIONED BY THE IMPACT THAT PROPAGANDA HAS UPON POLITICAL CHOICES TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS. WORDS ARE THE ARMAMENTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. FROM VIETNAM TO OGADEN EXAMPLES ARE NOT LACKING." THE AUTHOR FOLLOWS WITH A CLEAR AND PASSIONATE EXPLANATION OF THE CHARACTER AND QUALITIES OF THE ERW, CLEARLY IN SUPPORT OF ITS PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT IN THE LIGHT OF ALLIED INABILITY TO MATCH THE WARSAW PACT IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS. "NEXT MONTH THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT WILL BE HELD. CARTER DOES NOT WISH TO PRESENT HIMSELF AT THE 'GLASS PALACE' AS THE SOLE SUPPORTER OF A BOMB WHICH HIS ALLIES WANT WITHOUT HAVING THE COURAGE TO SAY SO. WHICH, HOWEVER, PASSING FROM STRATEGY TO POLITICS, HAS AS ITS CONCLUSION THE ABSURDITY OF RISKING NEGOTIATION WITH THE USSR HAVING RENOUNCED A PRIORI, AND WITHOUT COMPENSATION, THE BEST CARD AVAILABLE."

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9. UGO STILLE, REPORTING APRIL 6 FROM NEW YORK IN THE CENTRIST CORRIERE DELLA SERA, SAYS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ASSURED THE CONGRESS THAT HE HAS NOT DECIDED ON THE FUTURE OF THE N-BOMB AND BEFORE DOING SO WILL CONSULT FURTHER WITH THE CONGRESS AND THE NATO ALLIES. THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE HAD THE EFFECT DESIRED BY THOSE WHO LEAKED THE INFORMATION, IF IT DID NOT INDUCE THE PRESIDENT TO REVERSE HIS DECISION, IT HAS LED HIM "TO REEXAMINE ALL THE ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM." THE ERW DEBATE HAS ENLARGED, STILLE ASSERTS, ON THE TWO RELATED FRONTS, THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE QUESTION IS WHETHER RENOUNCING THE N-BOMB WOULD LEAD TO RUSSIAN CONCESSIONS THAT WOULD FACILITATE AN AGREEMENT IN DISARMAMENT. THIS ARGUMENT, STILLE SUGGESTS, HAS SPECIAL MEANING IN LIGHT OF SECRETARY VANCE'S PROJECTED VISIT TO MOSCOW WHERE HE WILL ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME THE IMPASSE IN SALT AND OPEN UP THE POSSIBILITY OF A CARTER/BREZHNEV SUMMIT

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MEETING IN JUNE. IN THE SECOND INSTANCE, RELATIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, "THE CARTER GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT THE FINAL DECISION ON THE N-BOMB PROBLEM LAY WITH THE COUNTRIES OF EUROPE...AS A RESULT CARTER MUST PROCEED WITH CAUTION TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION OF A UNILATERAL DECISION FROM WASHINGTON." THE RESULT OF FURTHER ALLIED CONSULTATIONS COULD PROLONG THE DEBATE UNTIL THE MAY NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON. THE DIFFICULTY WILL BE, STILLE PROPOSES, "TO RECONCILE THE APRIL DEADLINE (VANCE TO MOSCOW) WITH THE MAY DEADLINE (THE NATO MEETING)." IT IS POSSIBLE, HE CONCLUDES, THAT THE PRESIDENT MAY FIND CONSULTATIVE FORMULAS THAT WILL OFFER TIME IN WHICH HE WILL HAVE THE FREEDOM TO MAKE AN OFFER TO THE SOVIETS WHILE "PRESERVING HIS OPTION TO PROCEED WITH THE PRODUCTION OF THE NEW WEAPON IF IT APPEARS NECESSARY." HOLMES

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